

Trail to keep taxes in check

by ROBERT L. BAKER

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For School Board Appreciation Month, students from the Lackawanna Trail Elementary Center and high school presented the Trail board with books that will be placed in the libraries in their honor. In the front, from left, are students Emma Shaw, Benjamin Shaw, Joseph Shaw, Matthew Rakauskas and Cameron Mercer. In the second row are board president Mark Lombardi, high school students Madison Lee and Logan Garrison, and Carol Selwood. In the third row are board members Michael Mould, Ned Clarke, Joseph Strauch and Philip Stark. In the back are David Thorne, Adrian Bianchi and Kevin Mulhern. PHOTO COURTESY OF ALICE STUFFLE

Lackawanna Trail School Board voted Monday night that if it were to raise taxes for the 2014-15 fiscal year, that it would not exceed a 2.8 percent index established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Business manager Dave Homish preceded the vote by noting the present budget left Trail with a fund balance of \$1.083 million and "Our debt is under \$900,000 which is pretty good. I would think we wouldn't need to go beyond the index if we had to raise taxes, and I'm not saying at all that we need to do that."

The vote now clears the way for the new budget process to start in March and April with the need for approval by the board by June 30.

In celebration of School Board Appreciation Month, two high school students and five elementary center students made presentations to Trail members.

The LTEC students each had a book with them that was donated to the school library in the board's honor, and the high school students had four books to likewise find their way into the high school library.

Board president Mark Lombardi offered thanks to the students and their teachers on behalf of the school district.

The board gave a first reading to school policies dealing with 'Acceptable use of the Internet' and 'Electronic devices.'

A number of suggestions were made which essentially amounted to fine tuning a policy proposal the board members had before them.

Superintendent Matt Rakauskas noted that a public meeting to discuss the proposed policies before they are considered for adoption will be held at the Lackawanna Trail Elementary Center on Jan, 27 at 7:30 p.m.

He also added that both policies would continue to be posted on the district's website prior to the second reading in February and before final approval possibly in March.

In other business, the board okayed the payment of \$181,920 in bills. Board member David Thorne expressed concern "that an awful lot of money is going out of the district to pay for charter schools."

Homish agreed that \$137,000 for that purpose was a concern.

The board appointed Pam Insalaca to a long-term substitute elementary teaching computer position beginning March 3 through next January at a pro-rated salary of \$54,810.

It okayed a request by social studies teacher Anthony Dalasio to take 45 seventh and some eighth grade students to Washington, D.C., May 1-3, at no cost to the district.

Also, the following names were added to the district substitute lists: Lynn Stevenson, Clarks Summit, spec. ed.; Tami Gallo, Carbondale, elementary; Brenda VanLuvanee, Nicholson, café, tchr. asst.; Paul Darling, Fleetville, private driver; David Vangorder, Factoryville, bus driver; and Bob Padula, Nicholson, bus driver.

And, the resignation of Mark Bennett as assistant boys volleyball coach was accepted with regret.